

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5707

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SO ET US

SUBJECT: SOVIET PRESENCE IN SOMALIA

REF: JIDDA 5069

1. WE OFFER SOME COMMENTS ON SAUDI PROPOSAL FOR JOINT US-SAUDI
EFFORTS TO REPLACE SOVIETS AS AID DONORS TO SOMALIA, TRYING TO
DISTINGUISH BETWEEN COMMENTS REFLECTING OUR PAROCHIAL ETHIOPIAN
POINT OF VIEW AND BORDER QUESTIONS ON WHICH WE ARE NOT AS WELL
EQUIPPED TO SPECULATE, BUT ON WHICH WE TRY ANYWAY.

2. PAROCHIAL.

(A) ANY SUBSTANTIAL US AID TO SOMALIA WILL TOUCH
SENSITIVE NERVES IN EPMG AND WILL RESULT IN INCREASED SUSPICIONS OF
US INTENTIONS - SUSPICIONS THAT ARE ALREADY VERY HIGH. SUCH
PARANOID EPMG REACTIONS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED POSITIVELY NORMAL,
AND IN MANY CASES THERE IS LITTLE OR NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT THEM.
STILL, WE CANNOT BRUSH THEM ASIDE ENTIRELY BECAUSE IN CERTAIN
CIRCUMSTANCES EPMG IS CAPABLE OF TAKING ACTIONS SERIOUSLY
DETRIMENTAL BOTH TO EPMG INTERESTS AS WE SEE THEM, AND TO
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USG INTERESTS.

(B) IF USG UNDERTAKES SUBSTANTIAL ASSISTANCE EFFORT TO SOMALIA, WE SHOULD AT MINIMUM GIVE EPMG AS CANDID AN EXPLANATION OF OUR MOTIVATIONS AND OUR LONG-RANGE HOPES AS POSSIBLE. IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN RULING DIRG WILL CERTAINLY SUSPECT GREAT-POWER COLLUSION-BETWEEN USG AND SOVIETS, OR BETWEEN USG AND ARABS-TO DETRIMENT OF ETHIOPIA. THEY WILL COMPARE ON A PER CAPITAL BASIS THE AMOUNTS OF AID TO SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIA. THEY WILL ALSO WORRY THAT IF PRES SIAD BECOMES LESS DEPENDENT ON SOVIETS, HE WILL BE LESS AFFECTIONATE BY SOVIET RESTRAINTS. LIKEWISE AS SAUDIS TRY TO ACHIEVE GREATER INFLUENCE ON SOMALIA, ETHIOPIANS WILL WORRY THAT SAUDIS MAY BE DRIVEN BY SOMALIS TO GREATER PRO-MUSLIM INTERFERENCE IN THE HORN, VIZ: IN THE OGADEN, ERITREA AND IN DJIBOUTI TERRITORY.

2. BORDER VIEWS.

(A) WE WOULD SHARE TO SOME EXTENT EPMG'S PREDICTABLE CONCERN THAT SOMALIA IN MULTI-DONOR SITUATION MIGHT FIND ITSELF FREER TO TAKE UNILATERAL ACTIONS (AGAINST ETHIOPIA OR DJIBOUTI) THAT IF IT IS RESPONSIBLE TO SINGLE DONOR (AND SOVIETS MUST TAKE SHARE OF BLAME FOR ANY SOMALI MISBEHAVIOR). CERTAINLY LAST COUPLE OF DECADES HAS SHOWN THAT MULTIPLE DONORS GIVE RECIPIENT ADDITIONAL FREEDOM OF ACTION. MOREOVER INJECTING SUDIS DIRECTLY INTO THE TANGLED PROBLEMS OF THE HORN WILL NOT BE AN UNMIXED BLESSING, TO ETHIOPIA, TO FRENCH DJIBOUTI, OR EVEN TO OUR INTERESTS. AT SAME TIME WE CAN SEE SOME ATTRACTIVE POSSIBILITIES TO US-SAUDI PARTNERSHIP IN BLOCKING SOVIET DESIGNS. FORM MIGHT WELL PROVE IMPORTANT-WHO WOULD BE OUT IN FRONT? WE WONDER, THOUGH, IF SUCH A PARTNERSHIP WOULD NOT EVENTUALLY HIGHLIGHT, PERHAPS ABRASIVELY, OUR DIVERGENT INTERESTS AND MOTIVATIONS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT IMMEDIATELY FORESEEABLE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE RESOURCES COULD NOT BE PROVIDED BY USG UNTIL SOMALIS DO NECESSARY TO REMOVE EXISTING IMPEDIMENTS ON THEIR SIDE-WHICH THEY MAY BE UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO DO- AND WOULD NOT SUFFICE TO ALLOCATE NEW AID TO SOMALIA OF MAGNITUDE PROPOSED BY SAUDIS. IF SO, A SEPARATE SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST MIGHT BE REQUIRED THAT WOULD TRIGGER THE KIND OF PRESS EXPOSURE (US-SOV RIVALRY, COLLUSION WITH SAUDIS) THAT USG WOULD PRESUMABLY WISH TO AVOID.

(B) WE DO NOT PRETEND TO BE ABLE TO JUDGE, FROM ADDIS,
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THE RELATIVE WEIGHTS OF SUCH CONSIDERATIONS. NOR DO WE HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS ON HOW BEST TO RESPOND TO PRINCE SAUD'S RATHER AWKWARD QUESTION. WE WOULD WELCOME COMMENTS.

HUMMEL

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